[President.]

"This Council begs respectfully to tender its most sincere and loyal felicitations to His Highness the Elayaraja on His Highness's brilliant and distinguished success in the recent B. A. Degree Examination."

The resolution was unanimously passed.

DEWAN-PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT.

President: Now, there are one or two small announcements that I shall make, which may hearten and bring relief to the people throughout this State. Elsewhere I pointed out that Travancore requires an average of more than 30,000 tons of rice every month to meet the local deficit. I further stated that from July 1942 when the first of the monthly quotas was allotted by the Madras Government till the end of April 1943, the quantity required to be imported to meet the local deficit was 300,000 tons of rice. We got only 88,000 tons. The seriousness of the deficit, and all that the deficit connotes, might be gathered from those figures. I am glad to say that, as a result of very pertinacious advocacy on the part of our representatives and of Mr. Dixon, the Dewan of Cochin, the Government of India became increasingly conscious of what is due to us and what should be given to us, and I announced that over 80,000 tons of rice are expected during the coming three months. I am glad to be able to announce that this morning we have received the intimation or rather the Supply Order, supplying us with 33,700 tons of rice of fair average quality from the Central Provinces and Berar, the delivery to be between the first of June 1943 and the first of July 1943. In other words in the course of this month, we expect to get from the Central Provinces, something like 33,700 tons. We also expect to get from the Province of Orissa a quantity of 8,500 tons, in the same period between the 1st of June and the 1st of July. Now, therefore, we have a definite promise of about 42,200 tons. This is a very, very welcome and timely relief. So much was the situation accentuated that quite recently both Travancore and Cochin had to appeal in dire distress to the Government of Madras asking if it were not possible for the Madras Government to hand over to us a certain amount of rice to meet the immediate situation. I am glad to say that the Madras Government have, in their letter received this morning, agreed to give a loan of rice to be returned when the consignments sent by the Central Government arrive. And we are likely to get about 5,000 tons so as to meet the immediate requirements of Cochin and Travancore. Now I venture to say that this is extremely welcome news, and relieves the apprehension felt by everybody who was in charge of this baffling problem; and we trust that when the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

first consignments begin to move—and in this matter also Sir Edward Benthal, Member for War Transport, was particularly helpful—as soon as the priorities are implemented, we shall have got over the main crisis, which has been hanging over our heads like a Damocles' sword all these months.

In this connection, I have made an announcement that it is the intention of this Government to associate with itself, an Advisory Committee elected partly by the Legislature and partly, nominated by the Government. This honourable House will be called upon presently to co-operate in that matter and to elect two of its members to serve on that Committee. It has been the preoccupation and the ever present anxiety of the Government to take the local populations entirely into their confidence in regard to the system of the collection and distribution of paddy. I do not hazard the assertion that we have succeeded completely or even partially in our attempts. We have not had that complete acquiescence and enthusiastic co-operation from the land-owners and the producers of paddy and rice, which alone would make this experiment a success, which it deserves to be. Complaints have also been heard from time to time that officers high and low have interpreted these rules of Government sometimes harshly, sometimes artificially and merely according to the letter of the law. Complaints were specially frequent regarding the allowances to be given to various producers of paddy in respect of the seed reserve and the maintenance of their own family. Some of the worse cases of misconstruction or misunderstanding have been corrected, or sought to be corrected. But it may well be that there are many more instances of that kind pending investigation and correction. The only remedy for this state of things is that the various committees which are sought to be constituted, should regard themselves primarily not as protecting the interests of the grower or completely damning the grower, but as a kind of liaison between those who produce paddy and rice and the consumer. I trust that that spirit will permeate the country and that the success that has been achieved will be enhanced, because the success that has so far been achieved, I consider, is not very great.

There is another serious complaint, viz., as to the bias or the prejudice or the corruption of particular officers. I may assure the honourable members of this House that when any responsible source indicates the possibility or the fact of corruption, immediate enquiries are set on foot, and as I mentioned elsewhere, a large number of people are under enquiry today ; three of them have been severely punished and the case of another is under investigation and will be dealt with by Government within the next three

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[President.]

or four days. I am mentioning this to show what may be called the dark side of it. But on the other hand let me repeat, what I elsewhere stated, that at no time in the course of a fairly long public life, have I been struck by the patience, the good humour the loyalty and the law-abiding character of any people, as I have been, by the conduct of the people of Travancore, high and low, during a period when they were struggling for their bare sustenance, when there was considerable amount of money in the country. As a matter of fact we are suffering for various reasons—I shall not enter into that now—we are suffering from a plethora of money and the impossibility of getting anything for that money. Notwithstanding that phenomenon, the people of this State have maintained a demeanour and adopted an attitude which fills one's heart not only with satisfaction, but with pride and great hopes for the future.

The only matter that I wish to supplement in this connection arises from certain suggestions that have come to Government, and which on occasions of this kind are bound to come to Government, that all the systems of control, scrutiny, supervision and the official paraphernalia wandering round the country all these should be stopped and the ordinary commercial laws of supply and demand should have their course. I am afraid I have not been convinced of the soundness of such arguments. I was very timorously, but nevertheless very decidedly, against the theory of the Government of India, which did not want this control then. Within a week of the outbreak of the war, this Government started measures of control in regard to rice and yarn.

This Government may flatter itself that practically word for word what has been done by the Travancore Government was done by the Government of India and the Provincial Governments two and a half years later. And the same complaint is again heard in those very provinces which have adopted the control system that the control should be removed, and the control has been removed in certain localities. We have a Tamil proverb that it is only the crying child that gets the milk. I have very often stated that the people of South India do not cry enough and if they cry, their cries are not heard far enough and we do not get the milk. The crying child of Bengal has got it, the crying child of Madras is getting it and many other crying children want all control to be removed. I do not wish to analyse the root ideas underlying the phenomenon. Far be it from me to assert that the cries are sometimes hightened artificially, and that the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

14240

cries are engineered or subsidised by powerful interests, bent on profiteering and speculation. I have known instances of that kind and I, for one, decline to believe that any de-controlling measures will do anything but produce the utmost chaos in the State and on that matter, I am afraid, for the present, my mind as representing Government is made up, whatever any other quarter may do or say.

In answer to a letter which I received from a respectable member of the Legislature, I have drafted a reply which I think will elucidate my point of view and, in order that there may be no mistake or misapprehension on that matter, I take leave of this honourable House to read two paragraphs of that draft.

> "You have stated that in the present circumstances, the restrictions imposed on the movement of food grains and of private sales may be withdrawn and that the people may be allowed to take their chances in an uncontrolled market subjected to the natural economic forces of supply, demand and price level. The experience of this Government, gained with the introduction of successive measures of control and restriction does not bear out this view. On the other hand, it is their experience that any relaxation of the restrictions tends to intensify the very evils mentioned in your letter. This view receives confirmation from the recent measures of control introduced by the Government of India.
>
> When the supply is very much less than even the normal demand especially of an article of absolute necessity such as food, and when there is, in addition, a widespread apprehension of further and more acute scarcity, the inevitable tendency is towards hoarding and profiteering. Left to an uncontrolled market, the stock trickling down from the hoarder for disposal at profiteering rates will nevertheless be equally distributed among the consumers provided the purchasing power of the entire section of the consuming public remains at the same level. As this latter is evidently not at the same level, the available stock in the country will get into the hands of the hoarding dealer or the very rich section of the consuming public, leaving the vast majority of the population to utter starvation. It is as a preventive to this contingency that the present measures of control and restrictions are enforced by Government.
>
> You have further stated that the prohibition of transactions in regard to paddy and rice makes it impossible for respectable people to secure the minimum of what they actually require without resorting to equivocal methods. Government agree that it is altogether impossible under existing conditions to meet in adequate measure the requirements of the population on the pre-war scale. As stated in the Sri Mulam Assembly on 31-3-1943 the net deficit based on the normal requirements of the population during the last ten months in the State is more than 2 lakhs of tons of rice. In the absence of interference from Government, the crushing burden of this enormous deficit would have had to be exclusively borne by the poorer section of the population and not, as it is to-day, by the great majority of the landless section of the population irrespective of their purchasing capacity.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[President]

It is stated that there is no uniformity in the appropriation of paddy from the people and that while in some taluks only the quota is claimed in others additional quantities are also purchased. The purchasing programme consists of two stages (1) the purchase on uniform acreage basis and (2) purchase of surplus stock. In taluks where purchase on the basis of the fixed acreage quota is complete, the purchasing officers have commenced the second stage of work *viz.*—the purchase of excess stock. As the work in all the Taluks have not progressed at the same pace it happens that in some Taluks the purchase on the acreage basis continues while in the neighbouring taluks purchase of surplus stock has commenced. The defect in regard to the distribution of imported rice referred to by you can be cured only by the introduction of a State-wide rationing scheme."

I have read extracts from this letter in order to indicate what the Government have done and what they contemplate doing.

As to yarn, I have made it clear to the Government of India and our representative Mr. Kumara Das who was sent to Delhi for attending a conference on the subject has also made it clear, that the kind of standard cloth which the Government of India produced and placed before some of us in Delhi sometime ago, is not suited to the requirements of Travancore and Cochin, and I definitely emphasise Travancore, because I find some difference of opinion between Travancore and Cochin as to this matter of Standard Cloth, so I learn from a letter which I received yesterday. In the case of Travancore especially, the standard cloth system would find some difficulty in operation. Unlike most other parts of India, where mills have come into existence and have throttled the hand-loom industry, to-day in Travancore the hand-loom industry is one of the largest and most deserving of our cottage industries. There are literally tens of thousands—I had almost said hundreds of thousands—of people dependent upon that industry. To import standard cloth to meet our requirements might be good or might not be good from other points of view, but it certainly will have one result, namely, this handicraft will not only be seriously crippled, but many thousands of families will suffer privation. We have emphasised these aspects and what we have stated is somewhat like this: Assuming that the Government of India proposed, as their programme, to supply X millions of yards of standard cloth throughout India, that is, let us say, some 3,00,000,000 (three hundred million). We are over six million, *i. e.* 1/50th of the whole X by 50 we may get in the shape of yarn either for the whole amount or at least for 50%. That is the suggestion that we have made to the Government and we are in hopes that that suggestion will receive careful consideration.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

There is nothing more that I need say at the present moment. I felt it my duty to indicate to you the most recent development that has been happening in regard to our food situation, a situation which I know is exercising, and legitimately exercising, in the minds of every one in the Legislature and outside.

BILLS ASSENTED TO BY HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA.

The Secretary: I beg to report that the following Bills have received the assent of His Highness the Maharaja :

1. The Travancore Court Fees Act (Amendment) Bill.
2. The Travancore Village Panchayat Courts Act (Amendment) Bill.
3. The Travancore Insurance Act (Amendment) Bill.
4. The Travancore Poisons Bill.

STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE.

Mr. A. Lakshminarayana Ayyar (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Under Rule 76 of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I beg to lay on the table the following statement of expenditure authorised by the Government under Section 32 of Act II of 1108.

	Demand.	Amount. in Rupees.	Particulars.
V.	8-Registration, (*c*) Sub-Registry offices Establishment	15,576	For the appointment of additional staff and for opening new Sub-Registry Offices.
VII.	X. B. Productive Irrigation—Working Expenses	88,000	For extension and improvements to the second half of the Kodayar Left Bank Channel.
XIV.	20. Administration of Justice—(*d*) Law Officers	7,442	To meet the additional expenditure on account of the staff of the Legal Remembrancer's Office amalgamated with that of the Advocate General.
XIV.	do. (*f*) Administrator General	2,700	On account of salary, establishment T. A. and contingencies of the Administrator General's Office.
XV.	21. Jails—(*b*) Jail Manufactory Contingencies	8,000	Purchase of raw materials for the Jail Manufactory, at increased prices.
XXIV.	29. Medical and Ayurveda A. Medical Department	1,000	To meet the expenses of the Medical Committee.

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